

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 SCCT-02 PRS-01 CIAE-00

INR-11 NSAE-00 RSC-01 SY-04 USSS-00 L-03 H-03 SSO-00

INRE-00 TRSE-00 DRC-01 /051 W
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FM AMEMBASSY PORT AU PRINCE

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 8519

FBI WASHDC IMMEDIATE

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINS, PFOR, CASC, HA

SUBJECT: EXPLOSION AT CASTEL HAITI HOTEL - FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

REF: PORT-AU-PRINCE 1748 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY: INJURED COMPANION (CINDY ABRAMS) OF DECEASED (RALPH HARRINGTON) HAS INFORMED GOH SECURITY OFFICIALS THAT HARRINGTON MET A WOMAN FRIEND NAMED BONNIE HEDERMAN (NEE ROGERS) IN CAP HAITIEN ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2. HEDERMAN IS BELIEVED TO HAVE PASSED EXPLOSIVES TO HARRINGTON AT THAT TIME. HEDERMAN IS WIFE REPORTEDLY OF ONE "SKIPPY" HEDERMAN WHO SERVED 18 MONTHS IN JAIL NOT TOO LONG AGO FOR ARMED ROBBERY. PRIOR TO DEPARTURE FOR HAITI ON AUGUST 31, HARRINGTON INTRODUCED MISS ABRAMS THE EVENING OF AUGUST 30 TO A BLACK MAN CALLED "BERNARD" AT MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT. DESCRIPTION

OF BERNARD AND VEHICLE GIVEN BELOW. GOH OFFICIALS BELIEVE BERNARD WAS RUNNING HARRINGTON. GOH WILL PROBABLY SOON MAKE FORMAL REQUEST TO USG FOR INVESTIGATION FOREGOING. GOH OFFICIALS HAD EXPLAINED TO MISS ABRAMS THAT SHE HAD GOOD CHANCE OF RELEASE WITHOUT CHARGE AND FOR RETURN TO U.S. IF SHE TOLD THE TRUTH. AS GOH APPARENTLY NOW CONVINCED MISS ABRAMS HAS DONE SO THERE IS GOOD POSSIBILITY SHE WILL BE PERMITTED TO DEPART SOON, HOPEFULLY WITH PARENTS, MR. AND MRS. WALTER ABRAMS, WHO ARRIVED TO SEE
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HER ON FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6. END SUMMARY.

2. PARENTS OF CINDY ABRAMS, MR. AND MRS. WALTER ABRAMS, ARRIVED PORT-AU-PRINCE FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 TO VISIT INJURED DAUGHTER. PARENTS VISITED CINDY ON SATURDAY MORNING, FOR A SHORT TIME, SATURDAY AFTERNOON, AND AGAIN ON SUNDAY MORNING, SEPTEMBER 8. PRESENT WERE EMBASSY CONSULAR OFFICER WILSON AND KING AND FOLLOWING GOH OFFICIALS: (A) BERTHOLAND EDOUARD, SECRETARY GENERAL, DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR AND NATIONAL DEFENSE (IN AND OUT AT VARIOUS TIMES.) (B) SERGE ELIE CHARLES, LEGAL COUNSELOR, HAITIAN MISSION TO UNITED NATIONS (PRESENT AT ALL TIMES.) (C) LT. COL. FRANCIS CHARLES, DEPUTY CHIEF OF PORT-AU-PRINCE POLICE. (PRESENT AT ALL TIMES WITH HIS BROTHER, LISTED IMMEDIATELY ABOVE).

3. GOH OFFICIAL APPARENTLY IN CHARGE OF INVESTIGATION IS SERGE CHARLES

HE ASKED CONSULAR OFFICERS TO INTERVIEW CINDY ABRAMS IN PRESENCE OF HER PARENTS AS HE BELIEVED IT MORE LIKELY CINDY WOULD TRUST US OFFICIALS. AT SAME TIME, SERGE AND FRANCIS CHARLES INFORMED CONSULAR OFFICERS THAT THEY (SERGE AND FRANCIS) WERE AUTHORIZED MAKE OFFER RELEASE CINDY WITHOUT INDICTMENT IN HAITI IF SHE WOULD TELL THE WHOLE TRUTH ABOUT EVENTS LEADING UP TO EXPLOSION AT CASTEL HAITI HOTEL.

4. DURING TWO LONG INTERVIEWS, CINDY WAS DEBRIEFED. HER RECOLLECTION EVENTS FROM EVENING SEPTEMBER 2 THROUGH DAY OF EXPLOSION WAS VERY GOOD. HOWEVER, SHE WAS LESS THAN EXPLICIT ABOUT MEETING WITH A WOMAN WHICH GOH WAS INFORMED TOOK PLACE IN CAP HAITIEN ON MONDAY SEPTEMBER 2. THIS DISCREPANCY WAS NOTED BY SERGE CHARLES AND HE INFORMED CONSUL WILSON HE HAD HOPED THAT OFFER OF FREEDOM AND TRUST IN CONSULAR OFFICER BY MISS ABRAMS WOULD HAVE PRODUCED MORE ACCURATE INFORMATION. AS THIS HAD NOT BEEN THE CASE, HE COULD NOT GUARANTEE THAT HE COULD PREVENT HER INDICTMENT MUCH LONGER. CONSUL WILSON EXPLAINED THAT HE HAD DEBRIEFED MISS ABRAMS AS REQUESTED BUT WHEN IT CAME TO THREATS OF POSSIBLE LEGAL ACTION HE HAD TO ASSUME HIS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROTECTION AND WELFARE OF MISS ABRAMS. WILSON ASKED CHARLES TO SPEAK FOR HIMSELF REGARDING GOH POSITION. CHARLES PROCEEDED TO DO SO. HE REMINDED ABRAMS (STILL IN PRESENCE HER PARENTS) THAT SHE HAD BEEN WELL TREATED UNDER THE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CIRCUMSTANCES, THAT SHE HAD BEEN GUARANTEED FREEDOM WITHOUT TRIAL IF SHE COOPERATED COMPLETELY, BUT THAT HE (SERGE CHARLES) DID NOT BELIEVE SHE HAD BEEN COMPLETELY HONEST. HE SAID IT WAS INCOMPREHENSIBLE TO HIM THAT SHE COULD OMIT DETAILS OF MEETING WITH A WOMAN IN CAP HAITIEN ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, WHICH GOH VIEWED AS VITAL TO ITS INVESTIGATION OF EXPLOSION. CHARLES SAID HE WOULD RETURN TO HOSPITAL AT 5:00 P.M., SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 8, TO SPEAK ONE LAST TIME TO MISS ABRAMS. NEITHER HER PARENTS

NOR THE CONSUL WOULD BE PERMITTED BE PRESENT.

5. THIS TACTIC BY SERGE CHARLES WORKED. MISS ABRAMS DURING MEETING SUNDAY NIGHT TOLD GOH OFFICIALS FOLLOWING STORY. SHE SAID SHE HAD NEVER REALLY MET RALPH HARRINGTON UNTIL TUESDAY AUGUST 27, ALTHOUGH SHE HAD SPOKEN WITH HIM BY TELEPHONE AT INFREQUENT INTERVALS. SHE STATED SHE HAD WORKED FOR "KENTUCKY FRIED CHICKEN" IN MIAMI ABOUT TWO YEARS AGO AND AT THAT TIME SHE MET AN AMERICAN WOMAN CALLED BONNIE HEDERMAN (NEE ROGERS). BONNIE HEDERMAN CALLED HER ON SATURDAY AUGUST 24 AND TOLD HER RALPH HARRINGTON WANTED HER TO GO ON A TRIP TO CARIBBEAN WITH HIM. CINDY EXPLAINED TO BONNIE SHE HAD JUST LOST HER JOB AND COULD NOT GO AS SHE HAD TO LOOK FOR WORK. AT THIS POINT BONNIE ON HARRINGTON'S BEHALF SAID SHE WOULD RECEIVE \$200 FOR MAKING THE TRIP. MISS ABRAMS THEN AGREED TO GO.

6. BONNIE HEDERMAN, RALPH HARRINGTON AND CINDY ABRAMS MET THE FOLLOWING TUESDAY, AUGUST 27, AT A MIAMI RESTAURANT BELIEVED BY CINDY TO HAVE BEEN CALLED THE "BROTHERS THREE". MISS ABRAMS SAID SHE DID NOT HEAR AGAIN FROM HARRINGTON UNTIL FRIDAY, AUGUST 30 WHEN HE CALLED TO ASK HER TO PICK HIM UP IN HER OWN CAR AND GO TO AIRPORT WITH HIM. THIS SHE DID FRIDAY AFTERNOON. AT MIAMI INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT, HARRINGTON SENT HER UP TO THE BAR ON TOP FLOOR OF AIRPORT HOTEL. SHE WAITED THERE ABOUT 45 MINUTES AS HARRINGTON SAID HE WAS GOING TO BRING SOME FRIENDS TO MEET HER. HARRINGTON IN FACT RETURNED ALONE AND THEY WENT DOWN TO OCCUPY A HOTEL ROOM RENTED BY HARRINGTON. THEY REMAINED IN HOTEL ROOM UNTIL ABOUT 8:00 P.M. THAT EVENING, WHEN THEY WENT TO LOBBY OF HOTEL AND MET A MAN INTRODUCED TO MISS ABRAMS BY HARRINGTON AS "BERNARD". BERNARD, ACCORDING TO MISS ABRAMS, IS MIDDLE-AGED, BLACK, HAS VERY SHORT, DARK AND KINKY HAIR WITH GREY STREAKS (NOT SALT AND PEPPER), IS ABOUT 5 FEET 10 INCHES TALL AND OF MEDIUM BUILD. HIS CLOTHES WERE NOT PARTICULARLY LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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"SHARP" AND HE WAS WEARING A SPORTS SHIRT. THEY GOT INTO BERNARD'S CAR (DARK GREEN, TWO-DOOR, SMALL FOREIGN CAR) BELIEVED BY CINDY TO BE A FIAT. THEY WENT TO A RESTAURANT TO EAT; NOTHING PARTICULAR HAPPENED ALTHOUGH HARRINGTON TREATED THE MAN WITH RESPECT. THE NEXT DAY, AUGUST 31, MISS ABRAMS AND HARRINGTON LEFT FOR HAITI ABOARD AFTERNOON AIR FRANCE FLIGHT.

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ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SCS-03 SCA-01 SCCT-02 PRS-01 CIAE-00

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7. ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 2, MISS ABRAMS AND HARRINGTON FLEW TO CAP HAITIEN AND MET BONNIE HEDERMAN WHO APPARENTLY ARRIVED AND DEPARTED THAT DAY ON MOTOR VESSEL "SKYWARD". AT THAT TIME, MISS ABRAMS BELIEVES BONNIE GAVE A PACKAGE TO HARRINGTON. COMMENT: THIS IS BELIEVED BY GOH TO HAVE BEEN THE EXPLOSIVES AND DETONATORS.

8. MISS ABRAMS STILL CLAIMS SHE DID NOT REALLY SUSPECT ANYTHING OR BECOME FEARFUL UNTIL WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 4, BACK IN PORT-AU-PRINCE.

THAT DAY HARRINGTON, SHE REPORTS, WAS VERY NERVOUS AND SHOUTED AT HER FROM TIME TO TIME. IT WAS ALSO ON THIS DAY THAT HARRINGTON HAD TAKEN HER PHOTOGRAPH NEAR BOWEN FIELD (PORT-AU-PRINCE) IN SUCH A WAY THAT HE COULD OBSERVE THIS MILITARY AIRFIELD FROM THE STREET. SHE CLAIMS SHE NEVER IN FACT SAW ANY EXPLOSIVES AND THAT THEY WERE PLANNING TO GO OUT THAT EVENING TO WATCH THE SUN SET. THE EXPLOSION TOOK PLACE JUST BEFORE THEY LEFT.

9. SERGE CHARLES INFORMED CONSUL WILSON ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9. THAT HE WAS SATISFIED MISS ABRAMS HAD TOLD THE TRUTH. HE INDICATED THAT GOH WOULD ASK USG FOR HELP IN INVESTIGATING FACTS RELATED BY MISS ABRAMS. HE WAS PARTICULARLY INTERESTED IN DETERMINING IDENTITY OF BLACK MAN WHO MET HARRINGTON IN MIAMI JUST BEFORE HIS DEPARTURE AND SAID HE BELIEVED THE MAN MIGHT BE HAITIAN. CHARLES IN RESPONSE TO QUESTION BY CONSUL
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SAID HE THOUGHT IT VERY LIKELY THAT MISS ABRAMS WOULD BE PERMITTED TO LEAVE HAITI WITHIN REASONABLE TIME.

10. CONSUL CONVEYED TO MISS ABRAMS' PARENTS THAT THEIR DAUGHTER WAS BELIEVED BY THE GOH TO HAVE TOLD THE TRUTH AND THAT SHE PROBABLY WOULD BE RELEASED BUT THAT NO SPECIFIC TIME OF RELEASE HAD BEEN SET. COMMENT: POSSIBLE THAT GOH WILL WISH FIRST TO RECEIVE SOME FEEDBACK FROM USG ON EXISTENCE OF "BERNARD" OR BONNIE HEDERMAN. THIS WAS NOT STATED AS CONDITION OF RELEASE, HOWEVER.

11. WE WILL REPORT ANY REQUEST FROM GOH FOR INVESTIGATION IMMEDIATELY UPON RECEIPT. US AGENCIES COULD EXPEDITE RESPONSE BY BEGINNING PROMPTLY TO CHECK OUT FOREGOING LEADS.
THOMSON

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